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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2008

In Today's Papers

Dangerous Escalation in the Southeast
Milliyet, Hurriyet, Vatan, Aksam, Turkiye, Zaman and others: Mainstream Milliyet's headline reads "Dangerous Escalation" and reports that pro-Ocalan protests escalated the tension in the southeast and summarized the weekend protests. Main opposition party CHP leader Deniz Baykal described the Diyarbakir incidents as an uprising and called on the government to take appropriate steps in response. Conservative-nationalist Turkiye notes MHP leader Bahceli said "Turkey is going through a period full of malicious traps with an escalation in ethnic provocations in the country.. Turkey is in a junction between the fight against terrorism and ethnic separatism" Mainstream Vatan covers DTP's party group meeting in Diyarbakir extensively and characterizes DTP leader Ahmet Turk's speech as irresponsible provocation. All papers report Turk's claim that "in the 1980s the Kurds were the target of cultural and social genocide and this paved the way for the rise of the PKK." Tabloid Aksam and Islamist-oriented Zaman speculate that the DTP is fueling tensions to preserve its influence in the Southeast.

Editorial Commentaries on the protests in the Southeast
Mehmet Kamis commented in Islamist-oriented Zaman: ' 'The Prime Minister's trip to Diyarbakir seems to have really angered DTP circles and this anger has increased tension in the city. The PKK has been carrying the tension all over Turkey to city centres in the southeast and the timing of this is significant because it coincides with the Ergenekon trial. The PKK seems to be uncomfortable with the dismantling of a structure which is the cause for the PKK itself to exist.'

Mehmet Tezkan wrote in mainstream Vatan: "The picture we saw in Diyarbakir during the PM's visit there was gruesome. When the AKP came to power in 2002, terror was eliminated and the PKK was dispersed to the mountains. Life in Diyarbakir went back to normal. The perfect atmosphere was created for the politicians to solve the Kurdish issue. It was the right time to take action, but unfortunately, nothing was done. Six years after that we see the same picture again in Diyarbakir. The shopkeepers pulled their shutters down again, children stone the police. We see that just

like ten years ago, the PKK are in the cities and towns again. And we are using a wrong road map again to eliminate terrorism." Hasan Cemal wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "If in a country the murderers are protected, the coup attempters are protected, those responsible for mass killings are not tried, and forming gangs is allowed, all in the name of "protecting the state", that means that there is no democracy in that country. It means the country is not one with the rule of law, there are no human rights, no freedoms in that country. Turkey is this kind of country. Mr. Prime Minister, why don't you push the button to take the necessary steps, can't you see that the country is going backwards in the name of protecting the state?"

NSC: "Terror will be solved within the Framework of Democracy" Hurriyet, Radikal, Sabah, Milliyet, Vatan, Cumhuriyet and others: In a meeting yesterday, the NSC decided to support the proposal of the "High Board for Combating Terror" for the establishment of a new institutional structure to strengthen coordination in the fight against terrorism. Liberal Radikal reports that the NSC gave the message that terrorism threat would be solved on the basis of democracy.

The Constitutional Court: "Headscarf Reforms Violate the Principle of Secularism"

All papers: The Constitutional Court announced its detailed ruling to reverse the law allowing headscarves on university campuses which had been adopted by the parliament last year.. The decision said the new law's amendments of articles 10 and 42 of the Constitution were against the principle of secularism.

US Assistant Secretary of State Dan Fried's Visit to Ankara

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Zaman, Sabah and Radikal: Mainstream Sabah and Islamist-oriented Zaman reports that US State Department Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Dan Fried met with Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Ertugrul Apakan yesterday. Zaman quotes anonymous Turkish diplomatic sources who said that Fried had paid a courtesy visit to Ankara on his way back from a trip to the Caucasus.

Following MFA meeting, A/S Fried met with a small group of journalists and told them that "intelligence sharing with Turkey against the PKK will continue. The PKK realizes that northern Iraq is not a safe place for it any longer." Sabah claims that Undersecretary Apakan warned Fried to make sure that any new trilateral mechanism that will also include the Kurdish Regional Administration should not damage the tripartite mechanism that already exists among the Turkish and the US deputy chiefs of General Staff and General Odierno in Iraq.

Editorial Commentary on Fried Visit

Murat Yetkin wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Dan Fried told a group of journalists yesterday in Ankara, 'I understand that the PKK attacks may be demoralizing. Yet, the Turkish military is fighting in a very tough geography. The enemy is coming up with new measures against our cooperation. But we are also coming up with new measures.' The fact that Turkey and the U.S. discussed what other things apart from intelligence sharing can be done against the PKK was confirmed by a high-level official that Radikal spoke to after the meeting. Fried had a three-hour comprehensive meeting with Undersecretary Ertugrul Apakan before his meeting with us (the journalists) and Iraq and the PKK were not the only subjects discussed. They also discussed the Caucasus, energy and Afghanistan."

TV News:

CNN Turk

Domestic News

- 56 people, including 23 children, have been taken into custody in connection with protests in Diyarbakir

- Istanbul police directorate rejects media reports for torture in a police station

- Referans daily has to pay compensation of 4,000 TL to AKP vice-chairman Mehmet Firat for insulting him

- Budget debates start in the parliament

International News

- Iraqi Government spokesman Ali Dabbagh said his cabinet agreed to make changes in a proposed security pact with the United States
- India and Pakistan begin trading between their respective parts of Kashmir for the first time in six decades
- Turkish Embassy in Helsinki becomes target of arson attack